

Straight from the Horse's Ears



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authors of *Equine Acupressure: A Working Manual*

Horse ears are astoundingly expressive and amazingly sensitive. Horses communicate with their ears. Every horse guardian knows to watch her horse's ears to better anticipate the horse's behavior. Ears are the telltale signals for irritation, anger, fear...horses speak volumes with their ears.

In Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), ears are highly significant. While there is an entire set of acupressure/acupuncture points located on the ear and reflected throughout the body, the two points shown here work best for overall ear health.



As prey animals, a horse's auditory acuity must be incredibly keen, since it is a matter of survival. They have to hear the rustle in the bush 20 yards away to be able to get away, whether they really need to or not. Most of us know how sharp our horse's hearing is based on the snap of a carrot or the shake of a grain bucket from the far end of the pasture.

Horses can experience a loss of hearing due to a variety of reasons, including age, ear mites, infection, antibiotics, and genetic disorders.

Indicators of ear problems or hearing loss may include:

- excessive head shaking
- constant ear rubbing
- frequent startle-response to visual cues
- fluid or blood discharge from the ears

The ancient Chinese considered the ear and the auditory acuity of the ear to be related to the strength of the animal's Original Chi, or the original life-promoting energy. This Original Chi resides in the Kidney and it is thought that the animal is born with a specific amount of Original Chi which diminishes with age, illness, poor quality food, and other quality-of-life factors. When Original Chi is exhausted, the animal will die.

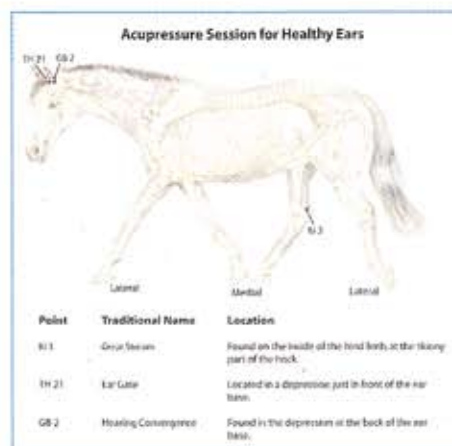
Because hearing is associated with Original Chi that is housed in the Kidney, it is good to support the horse's Kidney function as best we can with the intention of having the Original Chi last as long as possible. Acupressure points that can be used to help maintain your

(Left) The interest a horse expresses with his ears can make any ride more enjoyable. (Photo by Ellen Haight)

horse's Kidney function and directly benefit hearing are:

- **Kidney 3 (Ki 3)**, Great Stream – this point is known to enhance Kidney function and support Original Chi.
- **Triple Heater 21 (TH 21)**, Ear Gate – this is the Classical point for any ear health issues.
- **Gall Bladder 2 (GB 2)**, Hearing Convergence – GB 2 is located close to the ear and is used for ear problems and diminished hearing.

By including this short acupressure session along with your horse's grooming regimen, you can enhance his Kidney strength and ability to hear. Horses are dependent on their ears for their sense of safety and overall wellbeing. By stimulating the acupressure points noted in this article and on the accompanying chart, you can provide your horse with more than just ear health.



Healthy Ears Acupressure Session
(Image courtesy of Tallgrass)

Amy Snow and Nancy Zidonis are the authors of *Equine Acupressure: A Working Manual*. They own Tallgrass Publishers, which offers Acupressure Books, DVDs, Meridian Charts for horses, dogs, and cats. They founded Tallgrass Animal Acupressure Institute which provides hands-on and online training courses worldwide including a Practitioner Certification Program. To contact them, phone: 888-841-7211; web: www.animalacupressure.com; email: info@animalacupressure.com